

2012

Annual Report

Office of Newcomer
Services

Virginia Department of
Social Services



Virginia Refugee Resettlement Program

A Message from the Virginia State Refugee Coordinator

It is estimated that there are over 19 million displaced people who have had to flee their home due to political unrest, violence and human tragedy. Each year the United States provides a country of refuge and a chance for freedom and safety for a chosen few through the domestic refugee resettlement program.

As Virginia's State Refugee Coordinator, I oversee Virginia's participation in the federal program that works to ensure a "new" safe life for those refugees coming in to the Commonwealth.

I continue to be amazed that in spite of the difficulties that refugees face, there are numerous success stories that underscore the efficacy of this program. Many refugees that arrived in Virginia only a couple of years ago are now gainfully employed wage-earners, and refugee children have adjusted successfully to American schools. There are refugees who are becoming U.S. citizens through a citizenship initiative that we administer, and some refugees have had hands on volunteerism and community service experience as a part of intensive ESL participation. These successes are but a few of the many that I can recount.

It is my honor to serve as Virginia's State Refugee Coordinator.



For the complete message from Virginia's
State Refugee Coordinator Visit:

<http://www.dss.virginia.gov/family/ons>

A handwritten signature in black ink, reading "Kathy A. Cooper". The signature is fluid and cursive, written in a professional style.

Kathy A. Cooper

Virginia State Refugee Coordinator

Table of Contents

| | |
|--|---------|
| What Does the Refugee Resettlement Program Do? | Page 4 |
| Who is a Refugee? | Page 6 |
| A Refugee's Story | Page 6 |
| Eligible Populations | Page 7 |
| Employer Testimonial | Page 8 |
| Virginia Refugee Arrivals | Page 9 |
| Accomplishments: 2011 | Page 10 |
| Performance Goals and Results for 2011 | Page 11 |
| The Whole Picture: Refugee Arrival Chart | Page 12 |
| Refugee Resettlement Service Providers | Page 14 |
| Comprehensive Resettlement | Page 15 |
| Funding | Page 16 |
| ONS Staff | Page 17 |

What Does the Refugee Resettlement Program Do?

Under the direction of the State Refugee Coordinator, Office of Newcomer Services is responsible for planning, coordinating, implementing, and evaluating Virginia's Refugee Resettlement Program. Virginia's Refugee Resettlement program provides specialized support services and time-limited benefits to assist refugees and other eligible populations and their families. There are several major components:

- Refugee Employment Services
- Refugee Cash & Medical Assistance
- Medical Screening
- Unaccompanied Refugee Minors Program
- Special Projects
- Repatriation Program

Refugee Employment Services

Employment services constitute the heart of the Virginia Refugee Resettlement Program. The services are provided by public and private agencies and are designed to help refugees adjust and achieve economic self-sufficiency through employment. Employment services include:

- Job Search and Work Readiness
- English Language Training
- Case Management
- Support Services



With the help of refugee employment services, Ku Ku has found a job as a sewing machine operator at a local textile company.

Refugee Cash & Medical

Assistance

Refugees are eligible to apply for public assistance benefits. Eligibility is determined by local departments of social services (LDSS). Refugees are first screened for TANF (Temporary Assistance to Needy Families) and Medicaid eligibility. If they are income eligible for these programs but do not meet a categorical requirement, they are eligible for time-limited refugee cash assistance (RCA) and refugee medical assistance (RMA) benefits for up to eight months after arrival in the United States.

Medical Screening

Newly arrived refugees receive medical screenings at local health districts. The screenings are designed to eliminate health related barriers to resettlement and to protect the health of the U.S. population.

Repatriation Program

The Virginia Repatriation Program provides temporary assistance to U.S. citizens and their dependents who must return to Virginia due to destitution, physical or mental illness, or war.

Unaccompanied Refugee Minors

A refugee child who arrives in the U.S. unaccompanied by a parent or other close adult relative requires foster care. They are provided culturally-sensitive child welfare services in foster homes, group homes, or independent living arrangements.

Special Projects

- School-aged refugee children throughout Virginia are provided services under the Virginia Refugee Student Achievement Project (VRSAP).
- The Pathway to English and Civic Engagement (PEACE) project is designed to move Cuban entrants toward U.S. citizenship and provide those entrants who participate in the program with English as a Second Language (ESL) training.

For more complete information on Virginia's Refugee Program Special Projects Visit:

<http://www.dss.virginia.gov/>



Who is a Refugee?

A refugee is a person who is outside of his or her country of nationality and “who is unable or unwilling to return to, and is unable or unwilling to avail himself or herself of the protection of, that country because of persecution or a well-founded fear of persecution on account of race, religion, nationality, membership in a particular social group, or political opinion.”

- United States Refugee Act of 1980



A Refugee's Story

“ I left everything when I left my country. I left all my belongings, my family, and my friends. I knew nothing when I came to America. The refugee office helped me find an apartment and food. The office had connections that helped me get a good job.”

•Aqueel Rashid Moula Almola

Resettle from Iraq to Virginia by Virginia Council of Churches

Eligible Populations

Groups eligible for the benefits and services of the Virginia Refugee Resettlement Program include: refugees, asylees, Cuban/Haitian Entrants, Afghans and Iraqis with Special Immigrant Visas, Amerasians, Victims of Human Trafficking, and Unaccompanied Refugee Minors.

Refugee

A person who meets the definition of refugee in the U.S. Refugee Act of 1980.

Asylee

A person who has applied for and received asylum through the U.S. Court system or through the Board of Immigration Appeals.

Cuban/Haitian Entrant or Parolee

A national of Cuba or Haiti who was granted parole status or any other special status made available to Cuban/Haitian nationals

Afghan or Iraqi with a Special Immigrant Visa (SIV)

An Afghan or Iraqi who served the U.S. Government overseas and was issued a special immigrant visas.

Amerasian

Those from Vietnam fathered by an American serviceman.

Victim of Human Trafficking

An adult or child who has been certified by the federal Office of Refugee Resettlement as a victim of human trafficking.

Unaccompanied Refugee Minor (URM)

A refugee child who arrives in the U.S. unaccompanied by a parent or other close relative and who requires foster care. Also eligible are unaccompanied alien children who have been placed in the custody of U.S. Department of Homeland Security and children in the U.S. who have been designated as special immigrant juveniles.

Employer Testimonial



Purna Adhikari...a student in [the Salem Health and Rehabilitation Center's] Certified Nursing Assistance class...is a refugee from Nepal who had been in the United States for only seven months when we hired him. Purna always kept our class instructor on her toes and was an excellent student. When he finished the classroom portion and began the clinical, he quickly earned the nickname "the Purple Flash". He has also learned that an ice cream sandwich is NOT made of white bread and ice cream! Purna is a true asset to our organization. He exemplifies the kind of employee we strive to hire, those who care for and care about our residents.

He is coming up on his one year anniversary with Salem Health and Rehabilitation Center and is planning to apply for a scholarship with our company so that he can go on to nursing school. We are fortunate to have Purna.

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Melinda K. Gardner".

Melinda K. Gardner

Human Resources Manager

Salem Health & Rehabilitation Center

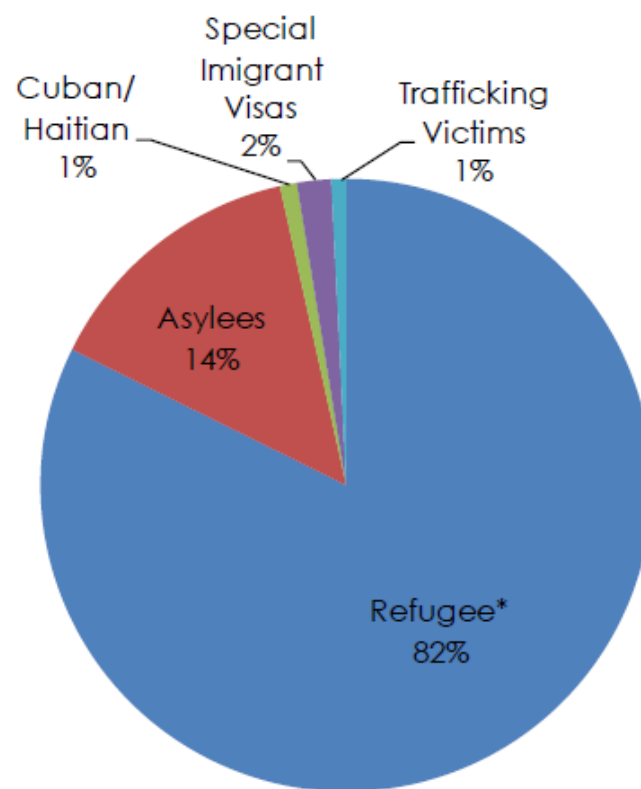
Virginia Refugee Arrivals in 2011

In Federal Fiscal Year 2011 (FFY11) Virginia received 1,671 arrivals from 41 countries.

Four percent of Virginia's refugee arrivals come from another state before moving to Virginia, becoming Secondary Migrants.

Refugees made up 82% of the arrivals. Asylees made up 14% of all refugee arrivals in Virginia in FFY 2011. The remaining 4% of Virginia's arrivals were Cuban/ Haitian immigrants, victims of human trafficking and special immigrant visa (SIV).

Virginia arrival numbers are based on data from the Virginia Newcomer Information System (VNIS) and the World Refugee Admissions Processing System (WRAPS).



* Refugee data includes Secondary Migrants

For more information on Virginia's Arrivals Data Visit:

<http://www.dss.virginia.gov/family/ons>



Accomplishments: 2011

The number of refugees entering employment exceeded program goals.

More than \$770,000 in additional resources was awarded through discretionary grants in order to provide targeted and intensive services to special groups within the overall refugee population.

The Virginia Refugee Resettlement program developed a data collection system to more accurately track Refugee Cash Assistance clients and payments.

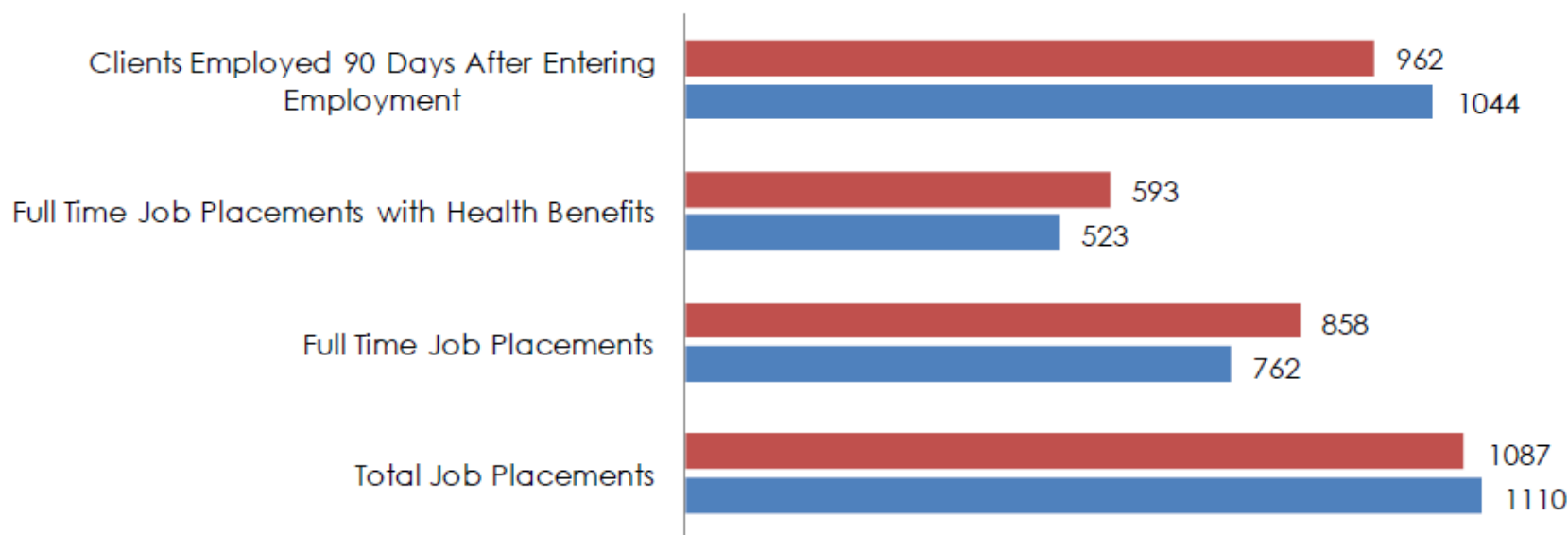
The Virginia General Assembly required VDSS to create a plan for the provision of services to victims of human trafficking. ONS established a state-level steering committee called the Virginia Steering Committee Against Human Trafficking (VASCAHT). VASCAHT approved the creation of three workgroups tasked with writing a plan to address primary anti-human trafficking issues.

The State Refugee Coordinator was asked to serve on the national policy committee for the State Coordinators of Refugee Resettlement.

ONS Performance Goals and Results for 2011

| | 2011 Goal | 2011 Actual | Percent of Goal |
|--|-----------|-------------|-----------------|
| Total Job Placements | 1087 | 1110 | 102.1% |
| Full Time Job Placements | 858 | 762 | 88.8% |
| Full Time Job Placements with Health Benefits | 593 | 523 | 88.2% |
| Clients Employed 90 Days After Entering Employment | 962 | 1044 | 108.5% |
| Average Wage of Full Time Placements | \$9.70 | \$9.68 | 99.8% |

■ 2011 Goal ■ 2011 Actual



Virginia Performance Goal information is based on data from the Virginia Newcomer Information System (VNIS)

For More Information on Virginia's Performance Measures Visit: <http://www.dss.virginia.gov/family/ons>

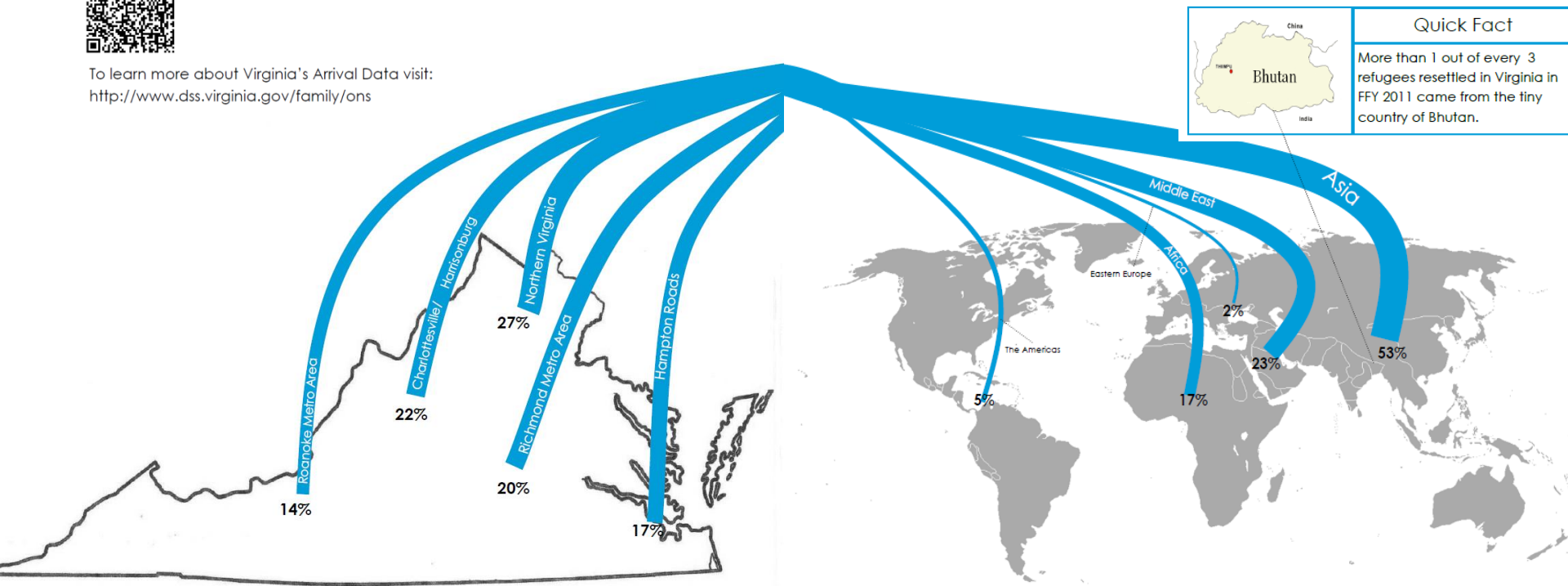


The Whole Picture

Virginia resettled 1,671 refugees in Federal Fiscal Year 2011



To learn more about Virginia's Arrival Data visit:
<http://www.dss.virginia.gov/family/ons>



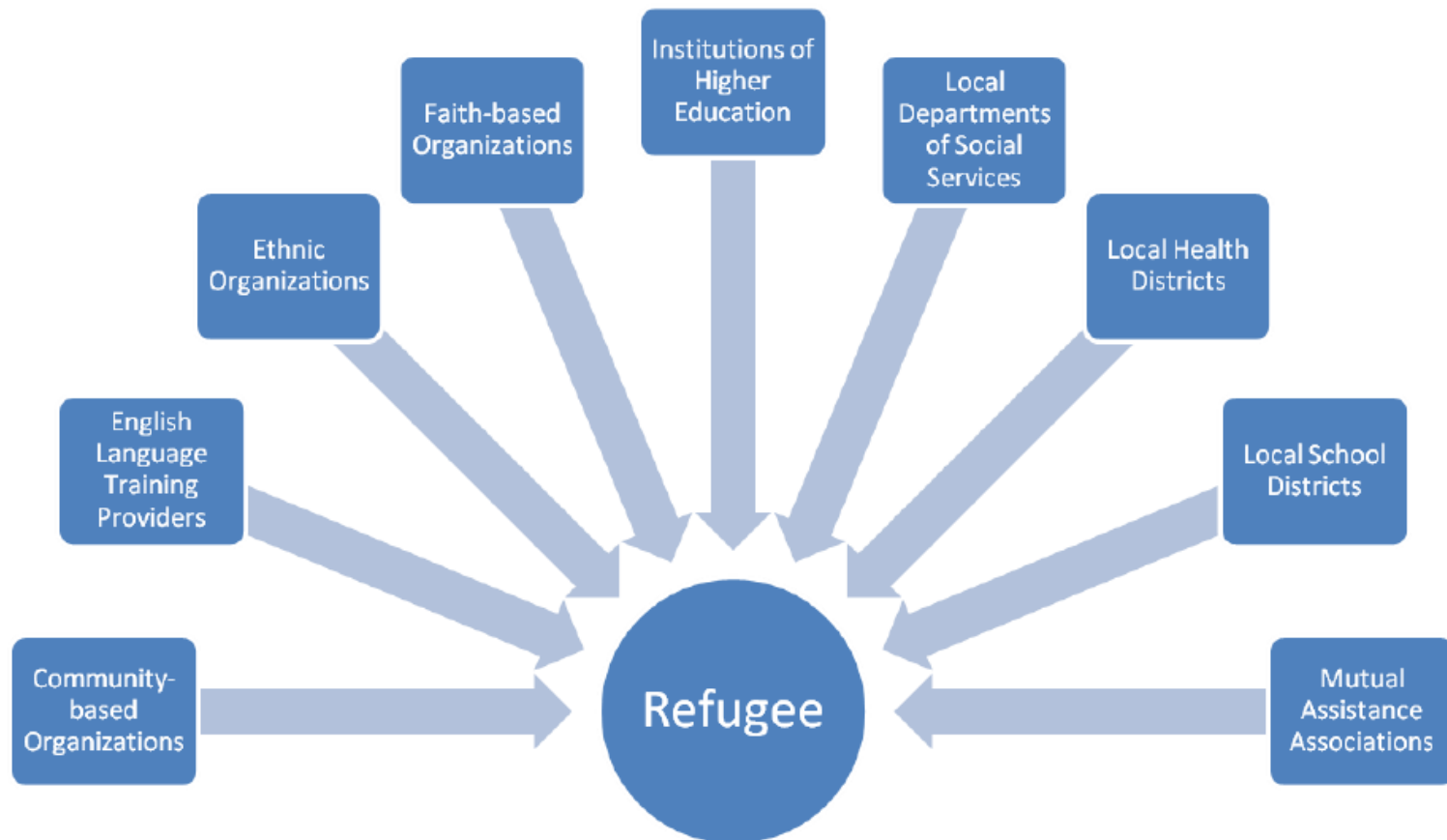
Refugee Resettlement Service Providers

The Office of Newcomer Services contracts with service providers throughout the Commonwealth to provide comprehensive resettlement services including employment assistance and English language training.

| Provider | Locations |
|---|--|
| International Rescue Committee | Charlottesville |
| Lutheran Social Services of the National Capital Area | Falls Church |
| Virginia Council of Churches Refugee Resettlement Program | Harrisonburg Newport News Richmond |
| Catholic Charities of the Diocese of Arlington Migration and Refugee Services | Alexandria Arlington Chantilly Fredericksburg |
| Commonwealth Catholic Charities Refugee Resettlement Program | Hampton Richmond Roanoke |

Comprehensive Resettlement

Virginia's Refugee Program takes a comprehensive approach to refugee resettlement. This approach focuses on assisting refugees integrate into their communities by tapping into a spectrum of resources. Comprehensive resettlement involves many partners.

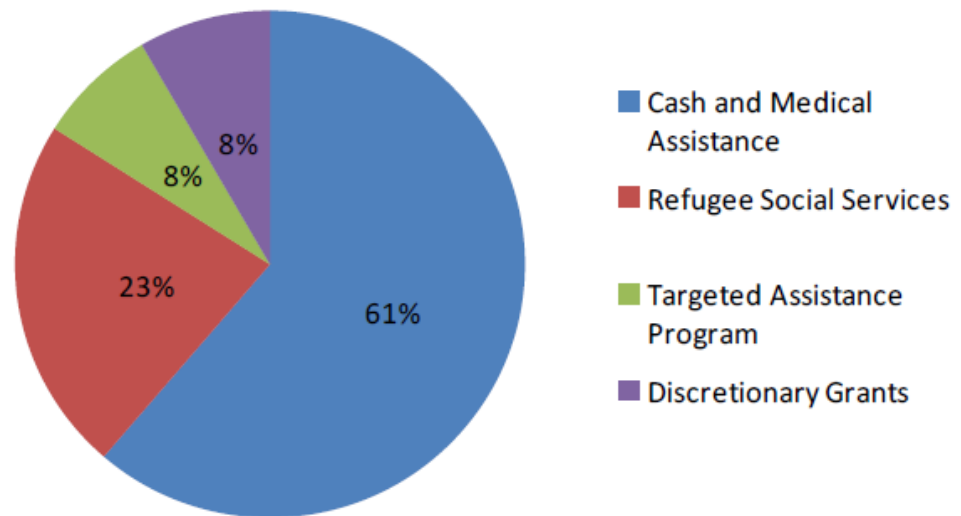


Funding

The Office of Newcomer Services is 100% federally funded.

In Federal Fiscal Year 2011, ONS deployed more than \$7.8 million for refugee resettlement.

| ONS Funding FFY 2011 | |
|-----------------------------|-------------|
| Cash and Medical Assistance | \$4,800,000 |
| Refugee Social Services | \$1,770,761 |
| Targeted Assistance Program | \$597,564 |
| Discretionary Grants | \$657,500 |
| Total Federal Funding | \$7,825,825 |



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Administration for Children & Families
Office of Refugee Resettlement



VIRGINIA DEPARTMENT OF
SOCIAL SERVICES

Front Cover Photo: US Department of Defense